

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are all the claims presently pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 1-22 are amended. Claims 23-27 were previously presented.

Applicants respectfully request acknowledgement of the preliminary amendment filed March 5, 2002, since the rejection currently of record fails to account for claims 23-27.

It is noted that the claim amendments are made only to assure grammatical and idiomatic English and improved form under United States practice, and are not made to distinguish the invention over the prior art or narrow the claims or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further, Applicant specifically states that no amendment to any claim herein should be construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the amended claim.

Claims 1-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

The rejections are respectfully traversed in the following discussion.

THE CLAIMED INVENTION

The claimed invention is directed to a device, system, methods, information recording medium, and program products for coordinating transactions. The transaction coordinating device coordinates the insertion of a spot transaction into a predetermined schedule of cargo transportation. The spot transaction is based on a temporary contract. The temporary contract is made without respect to a fixed transaction. The fixed transaction is based on a contract of predetermined term. The predetermined schedule of cargo transportation relates

Application No. 10/070,358
Attorney Docket: P-0258-US (KUR.011)

to the fixed transaction of predetermined term.

The transaction coordinating device has a transportation adjusting portion. The adjusting portion inserts the spot transaction into the predetermined schedule by adjusting the predetermined schedule. In different embodiments, for example, the cargo to be shipped on scheduled carriers and the carriers' schedules may be adjusted in accord with various conditions.

The system, method, information recording medium, and program products are similarly claimed.

The preferred embodiments have been developed for use with transactions dealing with liquefied natural gas (LNG). However, the invention is applicable to other uses.

Conventionally, producers and carriers of LNG have concluded sales contracts based on contracts defining long-term stable acceptance arrangements. Such contracts may commit to the acceptance and amounts of LNG determined each year of the fixed term of the contract; such terms may be more than 20 years. An LNG market and charter market for LNG freighters for carrying out a spot transaction based on a temporary contract (that is, a transaction based on one-time sales contracts or based on an intermittent supply contract) has not been provided.

The claimed invention, on the other hand, facilitates a flexible market of spot transactions in accordance with variations in at least the production and scheduled transportation of LNG or other commodities.

Application No. 10/070,358
Attorney Docket: P-0258-US (KUR.011)

THE 35 USC §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH REJECTION

Claims 1-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The claims are amended, above, to overcome this rejection.

Applicant submits that amended claims 1-22 clearly and definitely claim the invention. Examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 1-27, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are allowable, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such action would be appreciated.

In response to the Examiner's question regarding foreign priority documents, Applicants note that the present application is a US national stage application under 35 U.S.C. §371(c)(2) of PCT/JP01/03966. A copy of the International Application was filed, and communicated by the International Bureau. A certified copy of the Japanese Application JP 2000-21076 (Priority Date: July 06, 2000) was previously filed with the International Application.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary for allowance in a telephonic or personal interview.

Application No. 10/070,358
Attorney Docket: P-0258-US (KUR.011)

To the extent necessary, Applicant petitions for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency in fees, including extension of time fees, or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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